A POEM IN PRAISE OF WIT.

Semper ego Auditor tandem Numquam ne reponam?

Juvenal.

LONDON.

Printed and are to be Sold by *A. Baldwin* at the *Oxford Arms* Inn in *Warwick-lane.* MDCC.

A POEM IN PRAISE OF WIT,

ASsiſt me thou bright Genius of our Iſle,
Inſpire me with thy never dying Style,
Immortal Ben: Oh do thou make me fit
In Wit like thine to Sing the Praiſe of Wit;
Then wou'd I boldly Write, in every Line
The lovely eſtimable Gem ſhou'd Shine.

Wit,

Wit, that peculiar Gift of Providence,
Which Heaven in Mercy did to Man diſpence,
To ſweeten all his Cares, for that alone
Can make the bitter Draught of Life go down:
Imprinted in the Soul the Jewel lies,
And like the Soul Immortal never dies;
Hence do thoſe glorious Names ev'n now endure,
Which elſe had fal'n Forgotten and Obſcure;
But by Immortal Wit the Hero lives,
And to Eternal Memory ſurvives.
No more had *Troy* been heard of, but its Fame
Had almoſt been extinguiſh'd with its Flame;
But ſung by th'*Mantuan* Swan and *Grecian* Bard,
Thro' the whole World ſtill *Trojan* Worth is heard;
Still the *Achaian* Virtue we admire,
A generous Pitty does our Souls inſpire,
And while we Read we Mourn that dreadful Fire.
Thoſe great Examples of the Good and Brave,
Wou'd unregarded Periſh in the Grave,
All their green Lawrels wither in the Tomb,
Nor leave one Copy for the Age to come,

Did

Did not the Almighty Power of Wit deny
The Hero if he would, the Power to Dye,
But will tranſmit him to Poſterity.

Men, Languages and Seaſons wear away,
And rolling Time it ſelf feels a Decay;
Climates may change, and all Things weary are,
In eating Time, of their fix'd Station here;
But Wit for ever does the ſame remain,
Its Luſtre ſtill that Jewel does retain:
Tho' urg'd by gnawing Fire, the precious Ore
Still keeps its Weight, its Brightneſs as before;
Nor can the Metal Counterfeited be,
Tho' every Day their Vile Attempts we ſee.
I'th'City, at the Court, and every where,
Whole Heards of Fools (thoſe miſcall'd Wits) appear;
Each hath a Coining Brain, pregnant with Verſe,
And as he Walks does to himſelf Rehearſe,
And Pardonable 'twere, if what they write,
They wou'd alone to their dear ſelves recite:
But that unhappy Man, whoſe Fate t'has been
Before, the nauſeous Blockheads to have ſeen,

In bluſtring Bombaſt ſtrait is ſeis'd, *Dear Sir,*
How have you done this Thouſand Years, I ſwear,
I have more pleaſure in your Company
Than the whole Town beſides, and you ſo ſhy,
Prythee now what? Haſt writ of late no Play?
Thank Heaven! my Genius does not lie that Way.
I'm not Condemn'd to Write in a curs'd Age,
Where every Sot does Poetry Engage;
And ſoon as from a School and Tutor free,
Sets up a Maſter of the Faculty:
And now a Play to th'Theatre is brought,
By moſt inimitable Dullneſs wrought,
From any thing like Wit ſo very free,
You'd Swear, ſhould you the mighty *Dramma* ſee,
He had avoided it moſt carefully;
Yet theſe inſipid Witlings of the Age,
Tho' grown the Scandal of the Town and Stage,
Still Scribble on, of their own Iſſue proud,
The Town is prejudic'd, their Works are good.
Oh! Your a Critick, Sir, I know, Cries *Bays,*
Then Talks him Deaf of Poetry and Plays,
Tells him he now hath made a Comedy
Will laſh the Town for their Severity,

To his laſt piece which he had never Writ,
But urg'd by Indignation and pure Spite.
Not the fam'd *Roman* Talker *Horace* Sung,
Enjoy'd a more inexorable Tongue,
Than theſe the great *Criſpini* of our Time,
Our Noiſy ſenſeleſs Modern Sots in Rhime,
Yet theſe vile Scriblers do blaſpheme the Name,
And to themſelves attract that Word of Fame,
Due only to thoſe never dying Lines,
In which Immortal Wit for ever ſhines,
For 'tis not a dry Pun, a flaſhy Jeſt,
That ſets the Table laughing at a Feaſt;
The Proofs of Wit for ever muſt remain,
True Wit will always its true Worth maintain:
So tho' a Pibble at ſome diſtance Vie
With the right Diamond, and deceive the Eye;
Yet to an Artiſt both of them but ſhew
How eaſy the Diſparity we know.

The VVorld miſtaken Notions have of VVit,
And count him VViſe who cunningly can Cheat;
So the Equivocating Cit deceives,
VVith ſeeming Oaths the honeſt Fool believes;

Who

VVho giving Credit to his Perjuries,
He hath Out-witted him the Villain Cries.
So fulſom Lies of Paraſites may paſs
For Sterling Wit who are oblig'd to raiſe
Their Bread, by Flattering ſome gawdy Aſs;
As well that Rhetorick, we may witty Call,
To *Smithfield* Audiences Jack-puddings bawl,
Or the more ſolid Nonſence which within,
Is by the Underſtanding Mobile ſeen:
Nature and Art muſt both together meet,
Much Oyl and Sweat 'twill coſt to make a Wit;
For how can any thing be done in haſte,
Which till even Time can be no more, muſt laſt.
The Man that hath attained this precious Ore,
Is bleſs'd beyond the Gifts of Wealth or Power;
For he well knows his Works can never Dye,
Knows they'l be read by all Poſterity,
And views himſelf Immortal in his deathleſs Progeny.
So *Dreyden* not in fading Braſs or Stone,
But his own Labours ſhall be ever known,
And Ages yet unborn his Merit own.
Thro' all his Writings, in each ſingle Line,
Does *Nervous* Sence, and ſolid Jugdment ſhine:

What

What Wit and Judgment join'd but his cou'd make,
The ſweet Tongu'd *Maro* our own Language ſpeak,
Or crabbed *Juvenal*'s Satyrick Rage,
In *Engliſh* Gaul the Vices of the Age.
Long hath he reign'd the Sovereign Lord of Wit,
Yet ſtill the Muſes VVorld to him ſubmit.
Oh! for *Medeas* Project to ſupply,
The Age with a new Soul of Poetry;
The dying Bard ſhould be renew'd again,
And the VVorld ſtill enjoy that wondrous Man;
But this great Bleſſing do the Gods deny,
And his irrevocable Deſtiny,
For tho' his VVit ſurvive, his mortal Part muſt die,
Oh! then moſt ſacred Spirit e're you leave
Mankind, and of the VVorld your ſelf bereave,
In all the Muſes Treaſure nicely Pry,
Till you a Genius like your own Deſcry;
Then on the young *Apollo*'s Temples place
Thoſe Lawrels, which ſo long your Brows did Grace;
Inſtruct him how he ſhall for ever live,
Deſerv'dly worthy of the charge you give.
Still Knaves and Fools he muſt abhor like you,
Virtue admire, and like you Praiſe it too;

So tho' throughout an Age but one be Born,
With your Immortal Wit we ſha'not Mourn,
Since from your Aſhes a new *Phœnix* will return.
Still let me ſpeak his Priaſe nor ſhall I ſeem
To deviate from my undertaken Theme;
For tell me in what place dwells Wit or where
Is it's bright Habitation kept but there,
There undebauch'd the Goddeſs long hath reign'd,
And her undoubted Soveraignty maintain'd;
How can I ſpeak its price, then how define,
The Royal Gem, but opening every Line
Of his, I'll ſhew you there the Golden Mine;
Dreſs'd in the pureſt Robes of Eloquence,
The poliſh'd Jewel ſtrikes the raviſh'd Sence:
Not hard his Language, nor his Sence obſcure,
With Pleaſure the charm'd Reader Cons him o'er;
Nor tires tho' often Read, for you may view
Still ſomething more diverting, ſtill more new;
For Wit Ten thouſand differing Shapes can wear,
And Beautiful in every Form appear;
Here pleaſes You with Wars tumultuous Sounds,
And duſty Plains moiſtn'd with Blood from Wounds;

Here

Here Paints the Hero toiling for that Name,
And bravely daring for Immortal Fame;
And there he ſoftens you with Beauties Charms,
And tho' unſeen the deſcrib'd Goddeſs warms.
A ſudden Fire does our pleas'd Hearts invade,
And we admire the lovely Pictur'd Shade:
Such is the mighty force of Wit to move,
Even what we cannot ſee to admire and love.

But Wit, the greateſt Bleſſing of kind Heaven,
To Mankind very ſpareingly is given;
And but ſome few enjoy a mighty Store,
By Natures Bounty, while the reſt are Poor:
So the Eſtate the Heir enjoys alone,
Tho' the hard Father ſtarves the younger Son:
So for a *Congreve* or a *Wycherly*,
What mighty Crowds of †*Elkanahs* we ſee.
A *Milton* but one Century can ſhew,
D'urfys and *Scotts* in every place will grow;
Since Nature then ſo partially we know,
Does all her Valuable Gifts beſtow,
Let Us to whom ſhe hath a Niggard been,
Who never have her chearing Bounty ſeen,

† Elkanah Settle.

Leave

Leave to Fames Trumpets who's diviner lays,
Can like the laſt Ear piercing Trumpets raiſe,
From Duſt the periſh'd Soldiers dead Renown,
And force the Age the Hero loſt to own;
Let *Garth* and *Congreve*, in Immortal Verſe,
Cæſars Immortal Victories Rehearſe,
Who have a Genius, a Poetick Fire,
Such as that Glorious Task will well require.
Majeſtick is the Theme and large to Sing,
The braveſt General and the mildeſt King;
He to whoſe Godlike Arms alone we owe
The Power to make a haughty Tyrant bow.
Let them deſcribe him Plunging thro a Flood,
To meet oppoſing Fate, like the fierce God
Of Wars, the Hero thro' the Billows rode.
Let Us admire what ſhall by them be Writ,
And that way only pleaſe our ſelves with Wit.

FINIS.